

Message Text

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USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 0827

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, HU

SUBJ: NEW POLITBURO: MORE EFFECTIVE TOOL OF KADAR

REF: BUDAPEST 0826

1. SUMMARY: NEWLY-ELECTED 13-MEMBER POLITBURO (REFTEL) MADE UP OF NINE HOLDOVERS, INCLUDING KADAR, AND FOUR NEWCOMERS. NEWCOMERS (LAZAR, SARLOS, OVARI, AND MAROTHY) IN GENERAL APPEAR TO BE COLORLESS CREW WHO HAVE MOVED UP THROUGH BUREAUCRACY. NONE ARE PARTICULARLY KNOWN FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL. STRONGER MEMBERS AND THOSE MOST LIKELY TO HAVE EAR OF KADAR ARE HIS OLD CRONIES (ACZEL, APRO, BISZKU) AND PROTEGES (NEMETH, GASPAR). OVERALL, NEW POLITBURO REPRESENTS NO IMPROVEMENT OVER OLD IN TERMS OF LEADERSHIP
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POTENTIAL AND/OR PROVIDING CLEAR-CUT COMPETENT SUCCESSOR

TO KADAR WHEN THAT TIME COMES. VERY LIKELY NEW POLITBURO WILL TURN OUT TO BE EVEN MORE RESPONSIVE TO KADAR LEADER- S BP THAN ULD AND THUS UNDER HIS FULLER CONTROL. KEY DECISIONS INCLUDED ACZEL RETENTION AND NYERS DEPARTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. APPOINTMENT OF LAZAR MAY MEAN THAT HE WILL REPLACE JENO FOCK AS PRIME MINISTER LATER THIS YEAR WITH LATTER TAKING KALLAI'S PLACE AS HEAD OF PATRIOTIC PEOPLES FRONT, THE ELEPHANT'S GRAVEYARD FOR EX-PRIME MINISTERS. SELECTION OF LAZAR SEEMS TO BE RESULT OF COMBINATION OF FACTORS. HE IS REGARDED AS CAUTIOUS, CAREFUL MAN, WITH NONE OF SPARK AND SPONTANEITY OF HIS MAIN COMPETITOR ISTVAN HUSZAR, LIKELY TO BE MORE OF IMPLEMENTER THAN POLICY LEADER. HE WILL BE AMENABLE TO REQUIREMENT FOR MORE CENTRALIZED CONTROL OF ECONOMIC POLICY. DEPARTURE NYERS AT SAME TIME CONFIRMS THIS TENDENCY. AS LAZAR ALSO IS GOH'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO CEMA HIS CHOICE PROBABLY ALSO INTENDED TO UNDERSCORE HSWP COMMITMENT TO GREATER COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION WITHIN THAT ORGANIZATION, AND MAY WELL REFLECT SOVIET PREFERENCES. HE IS INTELLIGENT, HARD-WORKING, NOT PARTICULARLY PERSONABLE, CONSIDERED ONE OF HUNGARY'S BETTER ECONOMISTS. WHILE IN LIGHT PREVIOUS COMMENTS WE HAD ABOUT LAZAR VS HUSZAR IT LOOKS NOW AS THOUGH FOCK MAY BE DEPARTING FOR LESSER CLIMES, WE DO NOT WISH TO EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY THAT HE WILL REMAIN AS PM TO CRACK WHIP OVER COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (BUDAPEST 814) IN LINE WITH HIS SPEECH TO PARTY CONGRESS, AND THAT LAZAR'S SELECTION MEANS HE WILL HANDLE FOREIGN ECONOMIC POLICY WITH NEMETH RESPONSIBLE FOR INTERNAL ECONOMY. WE IN NET EVALUATE LAZAR'S CHOICE AND NYERS'S DEPARTURE AS REFLECTING CONSERVATISM BUT NOT AS MEANING ANY FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE. IN ECONOMIC POLICY.

3. OVARI, AGIT-PROP SPECIALIST, IS ONE OF MORE COLORLESS FIGURES WHO HAS WORKED HIS WAY UP IN BUREAUCRACY THROUGH COMBINATION OF HARD WORK AND ABILITY TO DETECT WHICH WAY WIND IS BLOWING. HE HAS BEEN STEADILY ON RISE SINCE 1970. HE IS EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS AND IS UNLIKELY TO PUSH ON HIS OWN FOR ANY PARTICULAR POLICY NOT ALREADY ESTABLISHED BY PARTY LEADERSHIP AS WHOLE. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE ALSO THAT PULLAI, WHO IN LAST FIVE YEARS OR SO HAS ADVANCED AT ALMOST SAME PACE AS OVARI, WAS NOT COOPTED

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INTO POLITBURO IS NO LOSS FOR WEST.

4. ONE OF SURPRISES WAS FAILURE OF RUMORED PUJA SELECTION TO POLITBURO. WE ASSUME THAT SARLOS WILL HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AREA FORMERLY DIRECTED BY KOMOCSIN. WE ESTIMATE SARLOS TO BE MORE IDEOLOGICALLY RIGID THAN KOMOCSIN, A MAN WITH LIMITED VISION STEMMING MOSTLY FROM LACK OF CONTACT WITH ANYTHING BUT COMMUNIST BLOC. HE IS APT TO ADHERE FULLY AS CLOSELY AS HIS

PREDECESSORS TO SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY LINE. HE WAS MOST IDEOLOGICALLY MINDED OF MANY OFFICIALS WHO RECEIVED CODEL WILSON EARLIER THIS YEAR, AND IS MAN WE WILL HAVE TO SEEK TO KNOW BETTER.

5. MAROTHY, A TYPICAL PARTY CAREERIST, HAS HEADED HUNGARIAN COMMUNIST YOUTH LEAGUE (KISZ) SINCE 1973 WHEN ISTVAN HORVATH DEPARTED TO TAKE OVER AS FIRST SECRETARY OF PARTY IN BACS-KISKUN COUNTY. HIS SELECTION DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE PARTY'S ENHANCED INTEREST IN PROBLEMS OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

6. ACZEL'S REMAINING IN POLITBURO WAS OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT DECISION. WE INTERPRET IT TO MEAN THAT BASIC CULTURAL POLICY WILL CONTINUE WITH ONLY SLIGHT MODIFICATIONS TOWARDS GREATER ORTHODOXY. HIS DEPARTURE FROM POLITBURO WOULD HAVE BROUGHT INCREASING NERVOUSNESS INTO INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC AT LARGE, ALREADY SENSITIVE TO HINTS THAT LESS EASY DAYS ARE PROBABLY AHEAD IN HUNGARY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

7. ASIDE FROM PUJA AND PULLAI IT IS SOMEWHAT INTERESTING THAT IMRE KATONA, SECRETARY OF BUDAPEST HSWP COMMITTEE AND ONE OF YOUNGER AND MORE DYNAMIC ELEMENTS IN PARTY, WAS NOT CHOSEN FOR POLITBURO. AS SECRETARY OF LARGEST HSWP UNIT IN COUNTRY (OVER 200,000 MEMBERS), HE HAS ONE OF MORE IMPORTANT PARTY POSITIONS. FACT THAT HE DID NOT FOLLOW HIS PREDECESSOR MAY INDICATE KADAR'S PREFERENCE FOR SEASONING PROCESS TO PROVIDE HIM MORE OPPORTUNITY TO SCRUTINIZE KATONA'S POLICY SENSE AND ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS.

8. AS FAR AS FUNCTIONS ARE CONCERNED WE ESTIMATE THAT ACZEL WILL HAVE SCIENCE AND CULTURE, APRO PARLIAMENT, BENKE IDEOLOGY, CONFIDENTIAL

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BISZKU PARTY ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS, FOCK GOVERNMENT (FOR TIME BEING AT LEAST), GASPARD TRADE UNIONS, NEMES HIGH PARTY SCHOOL, NEMETH ECONOMY, OVARI AGITATION AND PROPAGANDA, LAZAR ECONOMIC PLANNING AND INTEGRATION, MAROTHY YOUTH AFFAIRS, AND SARLOS FOREIGN AFFAIRS. PEDAESEN

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